



# Louisiana Coastlines

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

SUMMER 2004

## Local Coastal Programs - Working Partnerships

By: Adam Einck, DNR Public Information Intern

**L**ocal Coastal Programs (LCP) and Permit Information Centers have helped the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) conserve the coast and wetlands by involving parish residents and government officials and have increased permitting efficiency.



DNR first opened a Permit Information Center in May 2000 in Lafourche Parish as a pilot program.

Since that time, DNR has provided the computer software for four more centers in Jefferson, Cameron, Plaquemines, and Terrebonne parishes. Here applicants can ac-

quire professional assistance for the permitting process.

“Before, applicants did all of the work on their own and often times were not thorough enough,” Jess Curole, Lafourche Parish LCP Administrator said. “Today, the permit process for local applicants is shorter, faster, and

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LCP's are now operational in 10 of the 19 coastal parishes in the state with Terrebonne and Plaquemines parishes approved in January 2001. This year, DNR approved \$335,000 for local coastal programs with a funding match of \$328,000 by the participating parishes. St. Charles and St. John the Baptist parishes are currently going through the process of establishing a LCP.

“LCP's do take some burden off the state, but more important it gives the parish more input and authority into coastal decisions about proposed projects going on in their own backyard,” DNR Project Manager Jon Truxillo said.

## Agencies Sign CRMS Agreement

**T**he Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) monitoring program has developed a new monitoring strategy known as the Coast-wide Reference Monitoring System-*Wetlands* (CRMS-*Wetlands*). The project was developed to assess the cumulative effects of all the coastal projects by establishing a network of reference sites across the coast. The new CRMS system will provide information needed to evaluate the effectiveness of current and future efforts at recreating a sustainable coastal ecosystem.

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DNR New Orleans Field Office biologist Bill Boshart works with monitoring data to record water levels and salinity.

## **LCP Continued from page 1**

quicker thanks to onsite assistance and information,” Curole said.

LCP’s and Permit Information Centers help put local concerns first and keep locals aware of coastal issues and how to apply for local coastal permits.

“Nowadays, there is an awareness of coastal zone issues and citizens are in tune to most of the regulatory requirements within the coastal zone and our wetlands,” Curole remarked. “Applicants have a little more assurance of getting things right the first time as a result of having permit information centers located in their communities.”

Curole also said that LCP’s and Permit Information Centers are a one-stop shop, providing expert information to the public. “The biggest delay in the application process has always been incompleteness,” he said. “We encourage the public to utilize the LCP office, it’s a very valuable resource to them.”

Truxillo said that parishes interested in approval for an LCP should be willing to wait at least 18 months since it is a very thorough and involved process.

Local applications, when submitted to an LCP, are first looked at by LCP’s to determine if they are a local or state concern. Following the review by LCP, DNR makes the of-

ficial determination on processing. All determinations that are of federal or state concern are handled by DNR.

Some examples of local concerns are dredge and fill projects that do not impact state waters. The construction of piers, bulkheads and ditches are other examples.

LCP’s must submit an annual report, but every two years the state is required to review the LCP to determine if all objectives are being met.

### **DNR/CMD Interagency Affairs LCP Managers**

Gregory DuCote, Manager 342-5052  
Linda Pace, Supervisor 342-7936  
Jon Truxillo, Scientist 342-3394  
Marilyn Forbes, Scientist 342-1076

## **CRMS Continued from page 1**

The CRMS-*Wetlands* approach was developed by the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in collaboration with scientists at USGS, University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL) and Louisiana State University (LSU). “A key strategy was to establish a reference standard, or target, as a goal for restoration projects,” says Rick Raynie, monitoring program manager with DNR. “That way, planners can better understand the variability in the environment and the collective effectiveness of the entire restoration program,” he said.

Like the monitoring conducted to date, CRMS-*Wetlands* will monitor such

critical variables as water level, salinity, sedimentation, elevation and the variety and abundance of vegetative species within a site. Data will also be gathered on land-to-water ratios to evaluate how the landscape is changing. CRMS-*Wet-*

*lands* data will be assessed to test hypotheses of how these variables interact to support healthy and sustainable wetlands, and further the understanding of vegetation and landscape dynamics.



**Pictured L to R are: DNR Deputy Secretary Randy Hanchey, DNR Secretary Scott Angelle, National Wetlands Research Center Director Dr. Robert Stewart, and OCRM Acting Assistant Secretary Gerry Duszyński signing CRMS-*Wetlands* cost-share agreement.**

The signing of the CRMS-*Wetlands* Cost Share Agreement between DNR and USGS marks the beginning of a partnership to establish this program for the next 20-years at a cost of \$66,890,300. Other ongoing phases of implementation include landrights acquisition and selecting a contractor to construct and service new CRMS-*Wetlands* stations. The current timeline is to have monitoring equipment installed and contractors in place to begin collecting data under CRMS-*Wetlands* early in 2005.





## From the Office of Coastal Restoration & Management

### 2004 Legislative Report

By: *Gerry Duszynski*  
*OCRM Acting Assistant Secretary*

**T**he 2004 Regular Session produced several measures aimed at improving DNR's efficiency and effectiveness in the conservation and restoration of Louisiana's coastal wetlands. DNR worked closely with the Legislature as those measures were being considered. Legislation authored by Sen. Dupre authorized DNR to expropriate land rights to implement projects to conserve, restore and enhance coastal wetlands projects. A law proposed by Rep. Damico simplified landowner notification for coastal use permits when more than 10 landowners are involved; it will also increase flexibility for accepting contributions to the Coastal Mitigation Account of the Louisiana Wetlands Conservation and Trust Fund as mitigation for work authorized by coastal use permits, and will require DNR to ensure that such payments will cover habitat restoration costs.

A House Concurrent Resolution authored by Rep. Baldone requested DNR to review base mitigation costs used to calculate contributions to the Coastal Mitigation Account, and to change the mitigation rules to facilitate more appropriate mitigation; those changes would include the possibility of a program consisting only of monetary mitigation payments. Legislation sponsored by Rep. Pierre directed DNR to consider a permit applicant's history of compliance with the Louisiana Coastal Resources Program when deciding whether to approve or deny coastal use permits, and to promulgate guidelines for implementing that provision.

A House Concurrent Resolution by Reps. Dove and Scalise urged the Departments of Natural Resources, Wildlife and Fisheries, and Environmental Quality to cooperatively establish procedures for attaining a goal of issuing drilling and coastal use permits within 45 days of receiving a complete

application. These agencies will be required to report to the Legislature on their progress, prior to the 2005 Regular Session. Legislation authored by Sen. Dupre and Rep. Baldone changed the requirement for joint review of the coastal management guidelines by DNR and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries from annual to periodic; allowed the DNR Secretary to delegate the power to grant permits and related approvals to a division administrator; provided greater flexibility for denying, withdrawing, or placing coastal use permits in inactive status when the applicant fails to respond to DNR requests or inquiries within 60 days; and allowed landowners greater flexibility in directing mitigation on their property.

A law authored by Rep. Pierre changed the court venue for oyster lease compensation issues to the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial District (East Baton Rouge Parish), facilitating more-consistent determinations involving coastal restoration projects. Legislation sponsored by Rep. Damico authorized the Oyster Damage Evaluation Board at DNR to remove oyster samples from oyster leases on state water bottoms after notifying the lease holder to make damage determinations before the Board. A bill authored by Rep. Dove required DNR to establish a barrier island and shoreline stabilization and preservation program, while companion legislation by Reps. Dove and Baldone establishes a barrier island stabilization and preservation fund, derived from appropriations, donations, grants, and other monies that become available.

Governor Blanco signed into law these measures addressing positive steps toward continued coastal restoration efforts.

#### **LEARN MORE ABOUT LEGISLATION:**

**If you want to know more about recent legislation or to track bills go to [www.legis.state.la.us](http://www.legis.state.la.us) or subscribe to LEGISCON/Louisiana at [www.legiscon.com](http://www.legiscon.com).**



# DNR Permitting Process Shifts into High Gear

By: Adam Einck

The Department of Natural Resources has teamed up with other agencies in the last three years to help shorten the amount of time it takes to issue a coastal use permit (CUP). And now DNR Coastal Management officials are working to further improve the time reduction in the permitting process, so that a CUP can be completed within the agency's ambitious 45-day goal.

According to DNR Program Manager Rocky Hinds, the Coastal Management Division's joint electronic permit application form will

allow an applicant to complete the necessary paperwork online via the Web.

The current, paper-based joint application was introduced in November 2003 and was designed to make the application less complicated by creating a sensible 16-step process and to make the transition to an electronic form possible. This streamlined form has helped reduce the average time to issue a permit by nearly 60 percent.

In the fall of this year, Hinds said he expects the joint electronic ap-

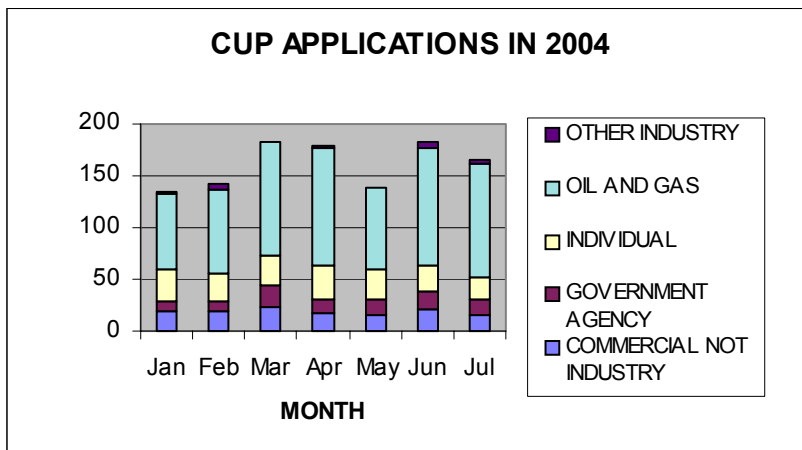
plication to be accessible from [www.dnr.state.la.us](http://www.dnr.state.la.us).

"The application will not be 12 pages," Hinds said. "By customizing the online application, fewer steps are involved because only specific questions are required by the applicant."

The online application is also expected to eliminate the chances that applications are incomplete and lacking pertinent information.

Hinds said that the idea of having a permit system that is totally computerized (paperless) will also eliminate days of processing time and is a near-future goal of the division. DNR and other participating agencies would work by e-mail communications in a more efficient and timely fashion to obtain approvals.

A permit tracking software application and online credit card permitting fee payment would also be in the new electronic permit system that could be available by next year.



This chart shows that over 60 percent of the coastal zone permitting activities occurs in the oil and gas sector.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> National Conference on Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Restoration *Weaving Restoration into the Tapestry of Coastal Life*

Restore America's Estuaries

September 12-15, 2004

Seattle, Washington

This diverse conference program will feature experts and leaders in all aspects of restoration, representing all coastal regions. Louisiana DNR Secretary Scott Angelle will attend and give closing remarks to participants on September 15th. For more information, visit [www.estuaries.org/2ndnationalconference.php](http://www.estuaries.org/2ndnationalconference.php).





# Coalition Plans Coastal Awareness Event

The Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, the America's WETLAND: Campaign to Save Coastal Louisiana, and Lake Charles Mayor Randy Roach will kick-off a state-wide Membership and Coastal Awareness Campaign on Friday, September 24, 2004 at the Lake Charles Civic Center, located at 900 Lakeshore Drive.

The Kick-off will feature Coastal Exhibits (from 10:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.), a Cocktail Reception (from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.), Guest Speaker (from 7:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.), as well as an opportunity to join other individuals, businesses, social/civic/environmental groups and communities who are working to preserve the future of our coast.

Mark Davis, Executive Director of CRCL said, "We believe every citizen in Louisiana has a vested interest in the future of our coast; therefore, the Coalition is diligently working to provide each citizen with the necessary resources, tools and opportunities to ensure the sustainability of our coast."



## Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana

746 Main Street, Suite B101, Baton Rouge, LA 70802

1-888-522-6278

[www.crcl.org](http://www.crcl.org)

### Coastal Awareness Kick-off Activities

**Thursday, September 23, 2004**

***Isle of Capri***

**10:30 a.m.** Press Conference

**Friday, September 24, 2004**

***Lake Charles Civic Center***

- 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.** Exhibits on the Mezzanine  
Project Wet available at entrance
- 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.** All exhibits open to public
- 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.** Cocktail Reception and Open Bar on Mezzanine
- 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.** Guest Speakers in Contraband Room
- 8:30 p.m.** Program Concludes



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# Hurricane Pam: A Strategic Drill in July

**I**t was the worst-case scenario for New Orleans residents. Evacuate immediately for an impending Category 3 hurricane with 120 to 130 miles per hour winds over several days. State of Mississippi officials agree to use Interstate 59 as an evacuation route. Heavy rainfall affected some 13 surrounding parishes with non-stop rain for 24 hours. Yes, Hurricane Pam was the big one, relentless, with 10 to 15 feet of water left in the streets of New Orleans. Tornadoes spawned, communications lost, debris and devastation all around. The death count—some 60,000—mostly from drowning. Hurricane Pam's forces proved to be bigger than any levee or pumping system surrounding the city.

While Hurricane Pam was just an exercise, there would be insurmountable challenges ahead for those called to action, even as a training event. Response teams, emergency coordinators, communications officers, public officials, and scores of people and resources would be activated to deal with a disaster of extreme proportion.

During July 19-23, a functional exercise was held at the Louisiana Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, where Emergency Management personnel, FEMA and associated agencies converged together to conduct response and recovery planning operations.

DNR had its place at the table.

clude onsite implementation at the Office of Emergency Preparedness operations headquarters and the scheduling of DNR staff once OEP is activated during a crisis.

"The team approach is very important to our agency's gameplan," Hinojosa noted. Looking into the glass window of the large response room at OEP headquarters, a familiar

face was present each and every day. Hinojosa was there, a soldier in this battle of recovery, taking responsibility when and where needed. Joining him at the operations center was Coastal Restoration Assistant Administrator Diane Smith and Public Information Director Phyllis Darensbourg.

During an actual emergency, a number of DNR volunteers will be on call and those include from the Office of Conservation: Michael Peikert, Brent Campbell, Todd Keating, and Joey Rodrigue. From the Office of Mineral Resources: Roy Brashier, Louis Temento, Ed Patterson, Don Sullivan and Craig Hyland. Along with Smith of OCRM, Chuck Villarrubia, Brad Miller, Greg DuCote, and Maury Chatellier will participate.



**Emergency response officials discuss Hurricane Pam's devastating impacts on thirteen Louisiana parishes at a week long drill held in July in Baton Rouge. DNR's Emergency Preparedness Deputy Mariano Hinojosa is shown here with one of the working groups.**

One of the first things DNR Secretary Scott Angelle saw to was the adoption of an Emergency Preparedness policy for the department. He brought together the DNR executive staff for discussion and input and implemented a plan of action. Commissioner of Conservation Jim Welsh was named Emergency Coordinator and he designated Conservation's Pipeline Director Mariano Hinojosa as Deputy-in-charge. His duties in-

# Underwater Obstructions Notice and Coordinates

In accordance with the provisions of R.S. 56:700.1 et. seq., notice is given that 48 claims in the amount of \$155,920.73 were received for payment during the period May 1, 2004 - July 31, 2004. There were 45 claims paid and 3 claims denied.

Loran Coordinates of reported underwater obstructions are:

27304	46929	JEFFERSON
27709	46895	ST MARY
27890	46861	TERREBONNE
27923	46852	TERREBONNE
28322	46825	LAFOURCHE
28590	46862	JEFFERSON
29291	47031	ST BERNARD

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates of reported underwater obstructions are:

2858.223	8918.480	PLAQUEMINES
2859.258	8908.377	PLAQUEMINES
2859.417	8908.308	PLAQUEMINES
2903.018	8916.722	PLAQUEMINES
2908.233	8919.894	PLAQUEMINES
2909.096	9056.253	TERREBONNE
2910.441	9027.921	TERREBONNE
2910.496	9003.716	JEFFERSON
2912.900	9052.560	TERREBONNE
2913.770	9027.980	LAFOURCHE
2914.311	9017.533	LAFOURCHE
2916.618	8957.101	JEFFERSON
2916.996	8949.398	JEFFERSON
2917.770	8944.230	PLAQUEMINES
2918.112	8954.833	JEFFERSON
2918.239	8953.184	JEFFERSON
2919.137	9000.201	JEFFERSON
2922.278	9030.845	TERREBONNE
2924.018	8931.070	PLAQUEMINES
2924.662	9002.764	LAFOURCHE
2926.680	8958.464	JEFFERSON
2926.807	9047.912	JEFFERSON
2928.803	9143.107	IBERIA
2931.079	9006.442	JEFFERSON
2933.591	8955.742	PLAQUEMINES
2933.610	9206.370	VERMILION
2936.508	8933.662	PLAQUEMINES
2939.951	9007.528	JEFFERSON
2940.750	8979.562	PLAQUEMINES

2941.944	8946.876	PLAQUEMINES
2944.230	8928.198	ST BERNARD
2949.710	8914.450	ST BERNARD
2950.585	8936.249	ST BERNARD
2950.916	8938.662	ST BERNARD
2951.208	8940.013	ST BERNARD
2953.917	8913.786	ST BERNARD
2954.451	8921.088	ST BERNARD
3002.761	8946.779	ORLEANS
3003.075	8946.657	ORLEANS
3008.830	8924.540	ST TAMMANY
3009.398	8923.195	ST BERNARD

A list of claimants and amounts paid can be obtained from Verlie Wims, Administrator, Fishermen's Gear Compensation Fund, P.O. Box 44277, Baton Rouge, LA 70804 or you can call (225)342-0122.

## Land Elevation Surveys



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Manager of Regional Operations Tim Osborn provided this photograph of a surveyor conducting work in Vermilion Parish.

A multi-government agency effort with NOAA is underway to update land elevations across the state and record sea level rise. The effort is to reestablish a network of reference points or marks in south Louisiana that have accurate and present day published elevations for use by the state for projects including highways, flood protection, coastal community growth and restoration.





## DNR/NRCS Promote Wetlands Program

### ATTENTION LANDOWNERS

Help address the loss of our coastal wetlands by restoring “pumped-off” agricultural land to coastal marsh and swamp. Many of you are familiar with the Wetland Reserve Program or “WRP” that is administered by the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LDNR) has committed funds to encourage more of these restoration projects in our coastal zone. The Coastal Wetland Reserve Program (CWRP) was created as part of the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation Plan, in which the State has pledged no net development-related loss of coastal wetlands. Louisiana is granting up to \$200,000 each year through the CWRP to help slow the loss of our invaluable coastal wetlands. You could be the next recipient!

### RESTORE

The purpose of the CWRP is to restore coastal wetlands on marginal croplands and pasture in coastal Louisiana. Over 600 acres of coastal marsh are being restored in Vermilion Parish under the CWRP. That tract had previously been leveed, pumped off, cropped, and pastured. By reestablishing the land’s water exchange with nearby coastal waters, coupled with the reintroduction of native marsh plant communities, the habitat for

coastal fish and wildlife that once thrived there was restored.

Lands restored as coastal wetlands are placed under a voluntary conservation easement whereby further development and farming of the land will be discontinued. Money equal to the agricultural fair market value is paid to the owner, who agrees to a permanent conservation easement. For 30-year easements landowners are typically paid 75% of the agricultural fair market value.

### RETAIN RIGHTS

Under the CWRP, the landowner retains the fee title, access to the land, and rights for activities such as fishing, hunting, trapping, the harvesting of alligators and crawfish. Oil and gas exploration and development is also allowable as a “compatible use.” Where directional drilling is not feasible and onsite drilling is necessary, disturbed areas must be restored to preexisting conditions once the oil and gas development is completed.

### RESPOND

Landowners interested in the CWRP can go to their local NRCS Office (USDA Service Center) and submit a WRP application. For more information, please call Jim Holcombe of LDNR (225-342-7940) or Mike Nichols of NRCS (318-473-7803).



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### Editorial Staff:

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Peggy Rooney, CMD Writer



## Hurricanes forecasted this season

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has predicted an above normal Atlantic hurricane season with 12 to 15 tropical storms, with six to eight systems becoming hurricanes, and two to four of those becoming major hurricanes of a category three or higher with winds of more than 110 miles per hour.



danger and destruction as never before,” said Louisiana’s governor, Kathleen Babineaux Blanco. “Because

we continue to lose so much of our valuable wetlands, people living along our coast are more vulnerable to the impact of a strong hurricane. For many communities, the only thing standing between them and a devas-

“This year, Louisiana’s citizens and our coastal wetlands are exposed to

tating storm surge is our vanishing coastal wetlands.”

This newsletter was produced by the Coastal Management Division under award NA-04NOS4190040 from the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of OCRM or NOAA.

